IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO EASTERN DIVISION

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NIKI FRENCHKO,

Plaintiff, : Case No. 4:23-cv-00781

vs. : Judge J. Philip Calabrese

PAUL MONROE, et al.,

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF HAROLD WIX

- 1. My name is Harold Wix, and I make this Declaration upon personal knowledge, and I am competent to testify herein;
 - 2. I have been a law enforcement officer for approximately 26 years;
- 3. I am currently employed as a deputy sheriff with the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office:
 - 4. I have been employed with the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office since 1997;
 - 5. I am currently a day shift supervisor for road patrol;
- 6. Prior to and including July 7, 2022, I did not have any personal relationship with Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa;
- 7. Prior to and including July 7, 2022, I did not have any feelings of friendship or animus toward Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa;
- 8. I did know that Commissioner Fuda was the presiding commissioner. My understanding is that the presiding commissioner keeps the meeting in order;
- 9. I did not ever text Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa. I did not recall ever speaking with Niki Frenchko, Frank Fuda or Mauro Cantalamessa on the phone;

- 10. Prior to July 7, 2022, I had not worked a security detail for a Trumbull County Commissioners' meeting;
- 11. In fact, I was not originally scheduled to work security at the Commissioners' meeting on July 7, 2022. I was working my normal duties of road patrol when I was told to report to the Commissioners' meeting by 10:30 a.m. by Lt. Kaintz because he [Lt. Kaintz] was unable to attend the meeting;
 - 12. The Trumbull County Commissioners held a public meeting on July 7, 2022;
- 13. Prior to the Commissioners' meeting on July 7, 2022, I did not know that Niki Frenchko made statements critical of Sheriff Paul Monroe and/or jail medical care. I did not know that Sheriff Monroe had authored a letter responding to Ms. Frenchko's criticisms;
- 14. About 30-40 minutes into the meeting, Commissioner Fuda asked the Commissioners' clerk, Paula Vivoda-Klotz to read a document into the record;
 - 15. Ms. Vivoda-Klotz began reading the document into the record;
- 16. At this time, Sgt. Ross and I were seated along the back wall of the Commissioners' hearing room on opposite sides from one another;
- 17. While Ms. Vivoda-Klotz was reading the document into the record, Ms. Frenchko left her seat on the dais and sat down in the first row of the public seating area;
- 18. Shortly after moving to the public seating area in front of the clerk, Ms. Frenchko began interrupting the clerk's reading of the document into the record;
- 19. I saw and heard Ms. Frenchko interrupt the reading of the document into the record at least four times. That is, Ms. Frenchko began speaking over the clerk and the clerk had to stop reading the document;

- 20. Commissioner Fuda repeatedly asked Ms. Frenchko to stop interrupting and speaking over the clerk;
 - 21. The clerk, Ms. Vivoda-Klotz became visibly upset;
- 22. The clerk tried to hide her face from being recorded by Ms. Frenchko, so Ms. Frenchko stood up and moved closer to the clerk to continue recording her;
- 23. I could hear members of the public who were at the meeting asking Ms. Frenchko to stop her behavior;
- 24. At this point, Deputy Ross and I stood up from our chairs, and we stood next to each other in the back of the room;
 - 25. Ms. Frenchko continued to try and speak over the clerk;
- 26. When the clerk finished reading the document into the record, Ms. Frenchko returned to her seat on the dais;
- 27. Ms. Frenchko began speaking after she sat down. After speaking for about a minute, Commissioner Cantalamessa and Commissioner Fuda told Ms. Frenchko that she was being disruptive;
- 28. Commissioner Fuda attempted to move on with the meeting, but Ms. Frenchko simply continued to speak over him;
- 29. From my perspective, Ms. Frenchko was disrupting the meeting. She repeatedly interrupted the clerk while the clerk was attempting to read a document into the record and then, when the presiding commissioner wanted to move on with the meeting, she just ignored him and kept talking;
- 30. At that time, Sgt. Ross and I made the decision to remove Ms. Frenchko from the meeting;

- 31. I got behind Ms. Frenchko's chair, told her she was being disruptive and asked her to stand up;
- 32. Ms. Frenchko did not stand up right away. I repeated my request for her to stand up. I pulled her chair a couple of inches out;
- 33. Ms. Frenchko then stood up on her own and was directed to leave the Commissioners' Hearing Room which she did;
- 34. Neither myself nor Sgt. Ross touched Ms. Frenchko at all in the Commissioners' Hearing Room;
- 35. In the hallway outside the Commissioners' Hearing Room, Sgt. Ross and I placed Ms. Frenchko under arrest for disrupting a lawful meeting;
- 36. I placed a handcuff on Ms. Frenchko's right wrist as Sgt. Ross was asking her to set her phone down;
 - 37. Sgt. Ross placed a handcuff on her left wrist;
- 38. Ms. Frenchko stated that she had asthma and did not have her inhaler. I offered to call paramedics, but Ms. Frenchko did not request the paramedics;
 - 39. Ms. Frenchko told us about a mobility issue with her shoulder;
 - 40. I told Ms. Frenchko that the jail's medical staff would evaluate her;
- 41. Ms. Frenchko then complained that the handcuffs were too tight. In response to that complaint, Sgt. Ross did two things: First, he used my fingers to check the gap between Ms. Frenchko's wrist and the handcuffs. He was able to fit a full finger in between the handcuffs and her wrists which, based on my training, is an accepted technique to check for tightness. Second, he then added a second set of handcuffs so that Ms. Frenchko's arms would not be behind her back—they would be by her side. Double cuffing relieves pressure on the shoulders. After double

cuffing Ms. Frenchko, Sgt. Ross asked her: "Is that better?" She responded, "Yes." She had no further complaints regarding the handcuffs;

- 42. Sgt. Ross and I escorted Ms. Frenchko to the Trumbull County Jail without incident;
 - 43. We advised Ms. Frenchko that she would be processed at the jail and then released;
- 44. After taking Ms. Frenchko to the jail, Sgt. Ross and I returned to the Sheriff's Office to complete our report and fill out the criminal complaint. A true and accurate copy of our report is attached hereto as Exhibit A;
- 45. Sgt. Ross and I made the decision to arrest Ms. Frenchko on our own. Nobody before, during or after the meeting on July 7, 2023 ever told us or directed us to arrest Ms. Frenchko;
- 46. Ms. Frenchko was arrested for her interruptive and disruptive conduct, not the content of her interruptions. I did not even hear or pay attention to most of what she was saying while she was interrupting;
- 47. Sgt. Ross signed a criminal complaint for disrupting a public meeting. The complaint was submitted to the Warren Municipal Court for filing along with a copy of our arrest report;
- 48. The prosecutor never spoke to me about the case at all. The prosecutor never told me about any order to preserve text messages;
 - 49. I do not recall ever being sued before;
 - 50. I did not know that I needed to preserve all of my text messages with other deputies;
- 51. I know that there were no text messages to or from me about arresting Ms. Frenchko prior to the meeting on July 7, 2022 because (1) nobody ever told me to arrest Ms. Frenchko and

(2) Sgt. Ross and I did not make the decision to arrest Ms. Frenchko until moments before we actually arrested her;

- 52. To the extent that there were any text messages after Ms. Frenchko's arrest, (1) I do not specifically recall any and (2) I did not specifically delete any;
- 53. The phone that I had on the date of Ms. Frenchko's arrest is not the same phone that I have now. My previous phone was not working well, so I bought a new one. The technician at the store where I purchased the new phone set up the new phone for me including transferring any text messages. I do not know how to change the settings in my phone to change the retention of text messages. After my deposition in this case, my attorney showed me the settings on my phone which revealed that text messages were set to delete after one year. I did not change the settings on my phone;
- 54. I declare on this <u>20th</u> day of <u>October</u>, 2023, under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Harold Wix

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	REPORTING OFFICER/ARRESTING OFFICER ROSS, SGT. ROBERT BADGE NO. 05591										DATE 07-07-2022	
ì	APPROVING OFFICER BADGE NO									NO. DATE 07 07 2022		
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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20

On July 07, 2022, Sergeant Wix and I were present in the weekly Trumbull County Commissioners's meeting, held in the Commissioner's Hearing Room, which is located on the fifth floor of the Trumbull County Administration Building, in the city of Warren, Ohio. Sergeant Wix and I were there to provide security for the public meeting, which was scheduled to start at 10:30 am.

During the public meeting, Commissioner Fuda asked the Commissioner's Clerk, Paula J. Vivoda-Klotz, to read a document. While Vivoda-Klotz was speaking, Commissioner Frenchko, who was seated at the Commissioner's desk area, got out of her chair with her cell phone in her hand and walked around the desk and sat in the front row of the public seating area, directly in front of Vivoda-Klotz. While Vivoda-Klotz was speaking, Commissioner Frenchko held her phone up in front of her, as if she was recording, and continuously interrupted Vivoda-Klotz by speaking and making utterances. Commissioner Fuda used his gavel more than once while saying "Point of Order!". Commissioner Fuda told Commissioner Frenchko to allow Vivoda-Klotz to finish speaking, and to stop interrupting her. At one time, Vivoda-Klotz became so visibly upset she had to stop speaking, Commissioner Frenchko said "nice" to her, in a condescending manner. Vivoda-Klotz held a piece of paper in front of her face and turned her chair sideways, then told Commissioner Frenchko she was uncomfortable with her recording her, Commissioner Frenchko then stood up and walked closer to Vivoda-Klotz and told her "if you're uncomfortable being on camera, then you shouldn't be the clerk". Commissioner Frenchko continued to speak over Vivoda-Klotz while she was speaking, which interfered with the meeting. Some of the people from the public were asking Commissioner Frenchko to stop. Commissioner Frenchko then went and sat back in her chair at the Commissioner's desk and continued to speak. Commissioner Fuda used his gavel several more times and told Vivoda-Klotz to move on with the meeting, however, Commissioner Frenchko continued to speak over him. Both Commissioner Cantalamessa, and Commissioner Fuda, told Commissioner Frenchko she was being disruptive. At that time, Sergeant Wix and I approached Commissioner Frenchko, who was seated at the desk, to remove her from the meeting. Sergeant Wix asked Commissioner Frenchko to stand up out of her chair several times before she complied. Commissioner Cantalamessa advised Commissioner Frenchko that she can be removed for disrupting a lawful meeting. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko out of the meeting and into the hallway of the Commissioner's office. Commissioner Frenchko was advised she was being placed under arrest for disturbing a lawful meeting. Sergeant Wix placed a handcuff on Commissioner Frenchko's right wrist as I was asking her to set her phone down (she was holding her cell phone and eyeglasses in her left hand). I had to take her phone and eyeglasses out of

REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	UVICTIM REFUSED TO COORP. ☐ JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ☐ ARREST - ADULT	ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED INVEST. PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST. PENDING	07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	ROS	S, SGT. ROBERT		BADGE NO. 05591	07-07-2022
APPROVING OFFICER	KAII	NTZ, LT. BRIAN		BADGE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729			
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME			
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20			

her hand because she refused to comply, before placing a handcuff on her left wrist. Once in hand restraints, Commissioner Frenchko advised of several medical conditions, one being Asthma (she stated which is why she was coughing during the meeting), and one being a lack of mobility in her shoulder. I immediately used a second pair of handcuffs, to give her shoulders more mobility. The handcuffs were gapped and double locked. Once the second set of cuffs were on, Commissioner Frenchko did not complain of pain. I asked Commissioner Frenchko if she had any weapons or sharp objects on her, she advised no. Due to the clothing she was wearing, I could not see any weapons so a pat down was not done until it could be done by a female corrections officer in the jail. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko to the elevator, which we took to the first floor. While in the elevator, Commissioner Frenchko told us "this is political", Sergeant Wix advised her that she was being disruptive at the meeting. Once inside the vestibule of the jail (by Central Control), I asked Commissioner Frenchko if her cell phone was done recording for security reasons, she could not record inside the jail. I handed her phone to her, she did something to her phone and said it's not recording and handed it back. Sergeant Wix and I escorted Commissioner Frenchko to booking, and advised Sergeant Nichols to have the medical staff report to booking to check on Commissioner Frenchko, who was walking and speaking to us. Commissioner Frenchko advised she did not have her inhaler, which I offered to retrieve for her if it was back in her office. Commissioner Frenchko asked if she would be staying in jail, I advised her that she would not be staying. I advised Commissioner Frenchko that she will be processed in the jail, then released.

Commissioner Frenchko is being charged with O.R.C. 2917.12-Disturbing a lawful meeting, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. Commissioner Frenchko was issued a summons to appear in Warren Municipal Court on Friday, July 08, 2022 at 9:00 am.

APPROVING OFFICER		S, SGT. ROBERT		05591 BADGE NO. 03377	07-07-2022 DATE 07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	☐ JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY ☐ ARREST - ADULT	WARRANT ISSUED INVEST. PENDING	UNFOUNDED INVEST, PENDING BADGE NO.	07-07-2022
REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER	VICTIM REFUSED TO COORP.	ARREST - JUVENILE	CLOSED	DATE CLEARED

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729
VICTIM	OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20

On July 7, 2022, I was performing security during the public commissioner meeting.

During the lawful meeting and a reading of an official document by Clerk Paula Vivoda-Klotz, Commissioner Frenchko removed herself from her commissioners's desk and sat in the first row of the general seating public side of the room and continued recording the reading of the document with her cell phone. While the clerk was reading the document, Frenchko began to verbally interrupt the clerk to the point where she became visibly emotional and tried to hide her face with the document while reading, Frenchko then got up from the chair and approached Paula where she was seated and continued to record even when Paula turned her chair to avoid the disruption. Commissioner Fuda warned Frenchko numerous times to stop being distributive by calling a point of order and banging his gavel, in which she did not comply. Frenchko was given ample opportunity to stop her disruptive behavior, even more opportunity than the general public who attends would be afforded. When Frenchko returned to her designated seat at the commissioner's desk, she continued to be disruptive. Deputies then approached Frenchko at her desk, and escorted her from the meeting. When exiting the meeting room Frenchko stated the she has asthma and did not have her inhaler I ask Frenchko if she needed medical attention and if she did the Jail has a full medical staff to check her. Frenchko did not appear to be in any way under duress of her medical ailments. Frenchko was placed under arrest for ORC 2917.12 Disturbing a Lawful meeting. When Frenchko was being placed in handcuffs she stated she has a medical issue with her shoulders. Deputies then placed 2 sets of cuffs linked together to make her comfortable. Frenchko was then transported to the Trumbull County Jail and served a summons to appear in Warren Municipal Court on Friday July 8, 2022 at 0900.

APPROVING OFFICER		NTZ, LT. BRIAN		BADGE NO. 03377	DATE 07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	WIX	SGT. HAROLD	7	BADGE NO. 03378	07-07-2022
REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	 □ VICTIM REFUSED TO COORP, □ JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY □ ARREST - ADULT 	ARREST - JUVENILE WARRANT ISSUED INVEST. PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST, PENDING	07-07-2022

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NARRA	TIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT NUMBER 22-07729	
VICTIM		OFFENSE	INCIDENT DATE/TIME	
	STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	07-07-2022 11:20	

On Thursday, July 7, 2022 Detective Wayne Mackey and I were informed of an incident that just occurred in the Commissioner's Hearing at a meeting.

Mackey and I interviewed two witnesses that were present during the meeting.

We spoke to clerk Paula Vivoda-Klotz in reference to the incident. The entire interview was captured on my audio recorder and it was saved to my work station. FOR EXACT WORDING AND PHRASING PLEASE REFER TO THE AUDIO RECORDING. Below is a brief synopsis of our interview with Paula.

Paula stated that she was instructed by Commissioner Frank Fuda to read a letter out loud at the end of the meeting. Paula stated that Commissioner Nikki Frenchko was filming the meeting with her cell phone on face book live and continued to film her reading the letter. At one point Frenchko got up out of her seat at the bench and went to the first row of public seating and continued to film Paula reading the letter. Frenchko made comments while filming Paula stating "oh it's hard for you, you shouldn't be the clerk if you can't have a camera on you". Paula stated that made her very uncomfortable, nervous and stressed out because Frenchko has filmed Paula many times in the past at meetings on face book live and said some "not so nice things" that the public and her family have seen. Paula remembers Frenchko getting up from the chair and moving closer (approx. 5 ft or less) to her from the side, at that point Paula stated she wanted to run. While Paula continued to read the letter she could hear Frenchko making comments to people while she was filming her. Paula stated that she took a deep breath and Fuda told to her continue to read the letter. Paula stated her voice was cracking from the stress but she finished reading the letter.

Paula stated that approximately ten people were present for the meeting. Paula stated during the meeting she saw the deputies come up to Frenchko and heard loud talking and arguing but did not want to see what was going on.

We spoke to Patricia Wyatt in reference to the incident. The entire interview was captured on my audio recorder and it was saved to my work station. FOR EXACT WORDING AND PHRASING PLEASE REFER TO THE AUDIO RECORDING. Below is a brief synopsis of our interview with Patricia.

Patricia stated that Paula read a letter in response to a subject that Commissioner Frenchko brought up at a prior meeting. According to Patricia while Paula was reading the letter Frenchko was filming her with her phone.

REASON CLEARED	DEATH OF OFFENDER PROSECUTION DECLINED EXTRADITION DENIED	 □ VICTIM REFUSED TO COORP. □ JUVENILE/NO CUSTODY □ ARREST - ADULT 	☐ ARREST - JUVENILE ☐ WARRANT ISSUED ☐ INVEST. PENDING	CLOSED UNFOUNDED INVEST. PENDING	07-07-2022
REPORTING OFFICER	MARCELLO, DET JOLENE			BADGE NO. 02079	07-07-2022
APPROVING OFFICER KAINTZ, LT, BRIAN			BADGE NO. 03377	07-07-2022	

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NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT	Investigative Narrative	INCIDENT DATE/TIME	2-07729
STATE OF OHIO	DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING	. 4	7-2022 11:20
Frenchko exited her chair at the public seating, sat down in the film Paula while she was readin approximately 8' feet away from the chair and walked to the side continued to film Paula reading Paula was clearly upset while Film Patricia believed there were appetite hearing. Patricia stated that took Frenchko out the door that someone told her she was getti and took a picture of Frenchko.	e bench and walked over chair and continued to he g the letter. Patricia start Paula at that point. Fre of Paula approximately the letter. Patricia state renchko was filming her. Proximately ten or more there were two deputient leads into the office. Pang handcuffed so she were	to the first row old her phone us ted that French enchko then go 3' feet away as ed that she could people present s present. The atricia stated the	v of the up and ko was ot up from s she id tell that during deputies nat
EASON CLEARED DEATH OF OFFENDER VICTIM REF	USED TO COORD ADDEST. WIVEAULE	CLOSED	DATE CLEARED
PROSECUTION DECLINED JUVENILE/N	<u>=</u>	UNFOUNDED	07-07-2022
EXTRADITION DENIED ARREST - AIR EPORTING OFFICER		INVEST. PENDING BADGE NO.	DATE
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KAINTZ, LT. BRIAN

07-07-2022

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INCIDENT NUMBER **IMAGE SUPPLEMENT** 22-07729 INCIDENT DATE/TIME STATE OF OHIO DISTURBING A LAWFUL MEETING 07-07-2022 11:20 22-07729.pdf